

Sundance Manager Says His Job Demanding, Rewarding

By JOSEPHINE ZIMMERMAN
Herald Staff Writer

"Demanding" and "rewarding" are the words Brent R. Beck uses to describe his job as general manager of Sundance Resort in Provo Canyon, a job he has held for 14 years.

Currently Beck is over the ski operation, restaurant, outdoor theater and all commercial aspects of the operation.

"It's getting bigger all the time, and we are putting on more people, hopefully to divide the responsibility," he said. Robert Redford and Stan Collins, owners of the resort, recently announced plans for a large expansion, including a conference center, year-around Sundance Film Institute, hotel accommodations and shopping facilities.

"We plan to broaden the cultural arts, dance, theater workshops, live performances of plays and additional concerts," he reported.

Beck said he will still be general manager over the commercial aspect, but they will bring in Sterling VanWagenen over the cultural part and Sundance Film Institute. John Lear will handle the real estate and land development.

Sundance has really changed during his 14 years, Beck said. "When I took over I could go for a walk and never see anybody. Now there's somebody enjoying the mountain all the time, with hiking, backpacking, cross country skiing, horseback riding, picnicking or walking the nature trail."

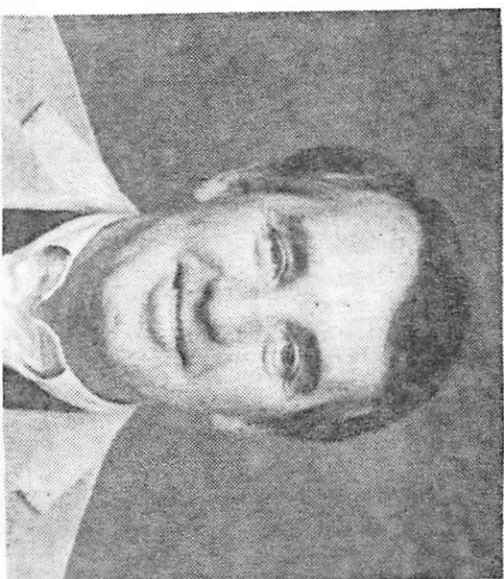
Beck said the summer theater once had a 300-seat capacity and averaged 300 customers a night over the season. "Now we average 600 a night. More than 50,000 people saw the show last summer."

He also noted that the ski business used to attract 30,000, and now it is in excess of 100,000. This year the skiing is particularly good. The resort in December had 128 inches of snow, the highest ever in that month. Usually the greatest depth occurs in February, with 134 inches last year.

As manager, Beck supervises 231 people, including all parttime workers, the volunteer ski patrol and ski school recreation instructors. The average is 78 full-time workers year around, and at the peak the number of employees will range between 250 and 250.

"It's quite an operation," he commented. "We pump \$800,000 back into the community in wages. All our employees live in the Provo-Orem area."

Beck says his job sometimes follows a normal 40



Brent Beck

hour week, and sometimes it's 24 hours a day. "When we were closed after Christmas because of the slides, we were snowed in and had to stay right here, but the job is fun and rewarding," he commented.

Beck has found working for actor Robert Redford very satisfying. "He's a very compassionate and understanding person and has been very supportive in my life," he said.

He commented that during his five years as bishop of the Edgemont LDS Ward, Redford was particularly understanding of the time the task required. "He's a very sensitive, firm person, but he's also flexible to other peoples' needs, and Stan Collins is the same way," he said.

Beck was vice president of the Intermountain Ski Area Operators for a year and currently is on the board of directors of the Utah Ski Association. He was appointed by the governor to the Utah Passenger Tram Board, a body that sets the rules for operation of trams in ski areas and grants safety approvals.

Born in St. George, Beck came to Provo as a young child when his father accepted a teaching position at Brigham Young University, and has lived here the 45 years since.

"The most important thing in my life," he says is his marriage to Fay Clarkson and their four children.

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